

## Harrell Fletcher's Art Ideas

These ideas were listed on the website of the artist Harrell Fletcher, circa 2006.

Harrell Fletcher is an artist and educator working in social practice art. In 2007 he founded the Art + Social Practice MFA program at Portland State University. Many of his projects and exhibits engage with strangers, the public and folks that may not identify as artists.

### Ideas

- In an elevator at a museum have a low music that starts at the bottom floor and then as it goes to each floor rises up, as it gets to each floor when the doors open the music volume hits crescendo turning into a joyous magnificent choir sound.
- Tear out all of the pages of a book or magazine that I don't like.
- Produce a set of my drawings as temporary tattoos.
- Get an artist like Chris Johanson to do free face painting on a street for a couple of hours.
- Suggest to the Whitney that I curate the next biennial.
- Have free classes or lectures offered in public places, make posters to advertise them.
- Video that I shoot of the sunset every day for six months of a year, show them one after another sped up really fast.
- Retrospective of a well know artist, but done all as Xeroxes that get posted in one neighborhood somewhere.
- Attach piece of art to appliances and furniture so that when someone buys the piece of art they also get something functional with it.
- For sale in a gallery undeveloped rolls of film that I shoot. Each roll would be of a different subject. The person who uses the roll can print the picture however they want to.
- For sale in a gallery as service: that I will come to the buyers house and make a sculpture for them out of stuff I find around their house.
- I paint a wall in a gallery a certain color and then sell the rest of the paint from the can that I used to paint the wall with. Maybe I would go and paint a wall in the collector's house with the paint.
- Sell a service where I come to a collector's house and plant a tree or a series of flowers in their yard.
- I dig up a pile of dirt in one area and then take it to another area and water it over time and see what weeds come up.

- A list of locations in NY where I have seen Richard Tuttle.
- I work with the Whitney PR people and write up press releases that are sent to all of the Biennial artist's hometown newspapers. I ask to have a copy of any articles the papers print as a result of the press release. I then make a "newspaper" of all of the various articles. This new newspaper is printed in a huge quantity and put in stacks to be taken for free at various locations around NYC (potential around the country) and also available in the Whitney's lobby.
- I find people from all walks of life in NYC or maybe across the country, kids, old people, artist, non-artists, etc. I would ask them to imagine the perfect show for the Whitney Biennial, I then ask them to draw the poster that would advertise this perfect show of their imagination. I would use the hand drawn poster that they make to make a large-scale poster that includes actual information about the Whitney Biennial: location, dates, etc. A designer, with normal fonts and all of that professional looking stuff puts in this part. The posters get printed. One set of these large posters would be displayed in the Museum's lobby, and a set of smaller ones are distributed all over the city.
- I approach parents with baby strollers and ask if I could videotape the baby, just a very short five-second shot. I would collect maybe 100 babies this way. The shot would be vertical with the face up at the top of the frame. The thing that is interesting is that even though its all babies in the same basic configuration they all vary in several ways: some are crying, some are smiling, some are sleeping, they are wrapped in different blankets and cloths, some have hats, etc. As I'm going around making the video I give out invitations to the show to the parents so that they can come see their babies in the museum.
- I re-create a bulletin board of fliers advertising events from Portland, OR (where I live) but I just base them on actual fliers and create my own versions of fictionalized events that could possible happen in Portland.
- I use the production budget to do a repair to some local person's house or to buy them a new appliance or to make some playground equipment. I then shoot a roll of 35mm film of the people using the house or appliance or playground equipment and show all of the snapshots in the gallery, just tacked to the wall.
- We offer free daycare for babies in the gallery for a day. I take a roll of pictures of the babies in the gallery; the pictures are displayed as described above.
- I produce a free newspaper that is all just quotes form local people about good things that have happened to them lately.
- I go to the place where I'm going to have a show and wander around for a few days taking digital pictures of anything that seems interesting to me.

A selection of these pictures are enlarged and framed and shown in the gallery.

- I go to where I'm going to have a show meet various people and look at their photo albums. Maybe I find someone who has gone on a trip to the US. I select from one of the albums a series of pictures that I might crop to highlight certain details, the images are scanned and blown up large and framed.
- I borrow snapshots from people who work on the street and do drawings based on them on various walls, inside and out, on the street. Small and intimate.
- I work with people on the street to make hand drawn ads for products they use. Could be Coke or BMW, but the drawing/ads are very clunky but sincere; they are made into posters and posted on the street.
- We make signs that say Whitney Museum, put them on the windows (with permission) of various stores and restaurants in the area as if the Whitney had taken over all of the stores and made them into galleries, but really we don't do anything to the stores just leave them as they are other than adding the signs.
- Same idea as above except in each of the stores and restaurants we actually do put on shows, curated shows of really good art, so that each place is really used as a Whitney gallery.
- I pick one person and do a whole show about that person and the thing that the person cares about.
- I make very little booklets that are about something I'm thinking about along with a little drawing or two related to the writing. These booklets are attached to clothing for sale at stores in the Whitney neighborhood. When someone buys the clothing they also get the booklet. On the cover of the booklet it would say, "I like this shirt too." Or "I like these pants too."
- I make a show of enlarged and cropped snapshots that belong to employees at the museum.
- I make a video tour with random shopper at a supermarket. Have the person discuss why they buy the things they buy.
- I put together a display about the contents of various people's cars or just one person's car.
- I go to a Laundromat and get the people there to help write a film script, then videotape the people acting out the script.
- I make a display about a local little league game, soccer match or something like that.

- Photo series on bald spots.
- I interview various people and find out commonalties. Then pair up the like-minded people-try to make them become friends.
- A video of me trying to cry.
- I construct new families for me to be a part of from various individuals and pets, take photographs of us together in family type situations. Show the photographs of the different “families” together.
- Make books from enlarged details of other peoples’ travel snapshots.
- A video of me talking very awkwardly and for a long time about cats.
- Write descriptions of “perfect” lives. Make up characters who live what I think would be fulfilling lives, write about their activities, interests, experiences. No plots just make lists, details, and descriptions.
- Make a dog field guide, to be used at dog parks.
- Elaborately illustrate with video, photographs, recreated objects, etc. some very ordinary event from peoples’ memories or a very well known historical event.
- Show about the “natural environment” around the art institution. Videos, photographs, drawings and writings based on animals, insects, plants, etc. found around the museum.
- Video piece about me only being able to speak English. I would have dinner with a family of polyglots. I would video tape the dinner, the family would not speak English during the videotaping. I would view the video and write subtitles in English of what I think the people are saying. The video would be shown as a projection with the non-English conversations going on and my speculated English subtitles. Polyglot viewers will be able to decipher my “dumb American” misunderstandings.
- Display called “five things I like” it would be five different things that I like-a video, an object, a story, a painting things like that.
- Go back to the grade school, Junior High and high school that I went to and do projects with the kids there.
- Make an ongoing video of close up shots of peoples’ scars with them telling the story of how they got the scar.
- Take several photographs from different angles of a random parked van. Blow the photos up big. A sort of extended look at something in which you don’t really see anything. Could also be done with a dog or a bathroom, or a lake or something.
- I make an employee wall for the Museum. It would be one like you find in Office Depot or Home Depot. It would be done as a pretty exact replica

of a store employee wall, but would be photos of the Director, curators, preparators, etc. and would include some slogans Like “Our visitors are everything, without them nothing else matters” that sort of thing.

- Set up a digital camera booth in the museum’s lobby when a visitor buys a ticket they get to also be photographed in the booth, the digital image is then presented instantly on a large scale LED sign board that is attached to the outside of the front of the museum.
- Send out a press release to various newspapers about a certain topic. Collect the articles that get written and show or republish them.
- An exhibition of photographs of a group of children meditating and or doing yoga.
- Newspaper about a single individual that I meet at the Whitney. All kinds of things about that person-snapshots, stories, personal objects, etc.
- Video of people doing gymnastic feats in ordinary places, on the subway etc.
- Toilet paper the Whitney. It could be really beautiful.
- Make the Whitney into a haunted house.
- A treasure hunt in the Whitney.
- Turn the Whitney into a dating service somehow so that visitors can go one dates with each other while at the museum.
- A gift given to every hundredth visitor the museum.
- Hello My Name is\_\_\_\_\_ stickers given out at the Whitney to all visitors.
- Bulletin board of kids produced fliers, possibly on a single subject.
- Go somewhere and cut people’s hair for free but always the same style.
- Design studio where the designers are kids and developmentally disabled people and old people.
- Exhibitions about home schooling and water birth.
- Light up a vacant lot with very powerful lights.
- For a show I just study a certain subject, like geography or I learn a foreign language. For the show I set up a little office and acquire material related to my study topic, talk to visitor about that subject; maybe make a little book on the subject.
- Get a group of people to come to a gallery and meditate together on a given day or series of days.
- Cover a tree in a public location with wind chimes.
- Remove something from a public space.

- Buy several Bigfoot tree sculptures in N CA and bring them to LA, put them in a public space and call the piece, Gift from the North.
- Create ads for park benches and public toilets.
- A show just about a single room, maybe a corner store, various things in the show, but all about the store and things in it.
- A project with a band, where I work with them to write songs, design the CD cover, and make a music video.
- Have a young child re-design my web site.

Ideas from notebooks 2001-03

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- A show about the contents of various people's cars.
- Have museum visitors tell stories, jokes, do performances, videotape these things and present them in the museum.
- Exhibition about local little league game, soccer match or something like that. Make videos, photographs, text pieces, collected objects etc.
- Documentary video of tour with randomly selected shopper at Safeway. Have them discuss why they buy the things they buy.
- Something about men getting older, fatter etc. Beer Bellies.
- Make a life like naked figure covered with moles and birthmarks.
- Make a life sized clothed figure with a very large birthmark on its face.
- A video of me trying to cry.
- A video of me doing things like: walking on my hands, juggling, jumping over someone, doing a "Russian dance."
- Bulletin board with fliers and cards and stuff made to look real, but actually all fabricated and about a certain subject.
- Short stories that I write enlarged on a gallery wall about the size of a large painting, in group shows with other pieces of art.
- Recreate Cleveland's Dad's pile of running shoes, with shoes from the seventies on the bottom getting more contemporary as the pile goes up. Maybe make it out of cement.
- A stack of books made out of cement used as places to sit.
- A show where I have various people come into the gallery during installation, two kids, a friend, a stranger of the street, a curator, someone famous, etc. collaborate with them separately on various projects with various materials.

- Video piece called “guessing your birthday.” Head shot of me saying very thoughtfully various dates in an attempt at guessing the unknown viewers’ birthdays.
- Make some full body suits out of various materials, afghans, things like that. Wear them.
- Make books from details of other peoples’ travel photographs.
- Make enlarges photographic pieces from peoples’ photo albums to be displayed in their own houses.
- Video everyday scenes-riding on a bus, walking down a street etc. Show someone wearing headphones. Have real headphones with various soundtracks with the video so that the different music makes the viewers look at the scene differently.
- A farm, gardening, softball and art center for all sorts of different people (kids, adults, disabled people). They are all there together doing those activities, eating and making food.
- Enlarge snapshots that my mom took of kids in the family.
- Show or book about my dad losing his eye when he was 16.
- Drawings and paintings of power outlets and light switches.
- Elaborately illustrate some very ordinary event.
- A show about trees, or five year olds.
- Educational projects about the solar system, botany, sex, etc. done in clunky ways.
- A sort of documentary installation about my three older sisters.
- A show that somehow includes me whistling on video.
- Community garden for homeless people with little shacks where they could live.
- Dwarf fruit tree orchard in grade school.

(These ideas were from my notebook during the year 2000 I think. Since then I’ve had lots of new ideas, but I haven’t gotten around to typing them out yet.)

Ideas from notebooks 2000